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ABSTRACT

In 1967 Neighborhood House joined with the Seattle Day Nursery, an agency which has provided quality child care for many years, to institute a Head Start day care program for children from low-income families. The program established has two components: the St. James Head Start Center which has three classrooms and the Day Care Home Program which operates in individual homes in housing projects. Both components provide health services, nutrition, education, social and psychological services plus opportunities for parent involvement according to Head Start goals. The St. James Center uses three models as the basis of classroom operation and instruction: the Human Development Model, the Responsive Environment Model, and the Social Reinforcement Model. Each head teacher chooses the model she thinks will be most appropriate for her classroom. The Day Care Home Program includes 10 homes in four sites run by mothers carefully screened for the task. Personnel are encouraged to take advantage of the career ladder to advance to positions of greater responsibility within the program. Future plans include establishment of activity homes to provide before- and after-school care for school-age children and provisions for care of sick children. Sources of more detailed information are provided for this program, specifically, and for Model Programs Childhood Education, in general. (Author/WY)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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OE-20130

Model Programs

Childhood Education

Neighborhood House Child Care Services

Seattle, Washington

Seattle's answer to child care problems of low-income families

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of 34 in a series of promising programs on childhood education prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. The series was written under contract by the American Institutes for Research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Within the broad area of childhood education the series includes descriptions of programs on reading and language development, the disadvantaged, preschool education, and special education. In describing a program, each booklet provides details about the purpose; the children reached; specific materials, facilities, and staff involved; and other special features such as community services, parental involvement, and finances. Sources of further information on the programs are also provided.

Where can a working mother obtain good day care for her children? For some mothers this question may not be so difficult to answer, but for mothers from low-income families it has often been unanswerable. Who can provide the service these mothers need at a reasonable cost? And who can provide the care their children need--care that fosters social development and educational growth in preparation for school? Seattle, Washington, is attempting to answer these questions by working from within the group that has the greatest need--mothers of low-income families. Seattle's Neighborhood House Child Care Services program provides day care in centers staffed by professionally trained personnel recruited from poverty areas.

The Neighborhood House program includes full day care in a Head Start Center and in Head Start day care homes, the majority of the staff members coming from the low-income target population. The program is affecting the lives of the children involved, their parents, and the staff, and is opening the doors for upward mobility for the family as well as providing quality day care for the children.

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE DEFINES A NEED

Seattle, a metropolitan area located on Puget Sound in Washington State, depends heavily upon the aerospace industry and the small industries which support it. Due to recent cutbacks in employment by a major aircraft company, the unemployment rate has risen to 12 percent for Seattle as a whole and to about 25 percent in the low-income areas. Seattle children who need low-cost day care programs are usually from single-parent homes in these areas, where the mother works and the average family income is about $2,500. For the mother to acquire the necessary education and training for holding a job, she must have adequate day care for her young children. Only then is she able to receive maximum benefit from her training and make the fastest possible adjustment to a gainful employment situation.

Seattle's low-income areas are concentrated around five low-income housing projects which come under the jurisdiction of Neighborhood House. A social agency with centers in each of the five housing projects, Neighborhood House is funded by United Good Neighbors and the Seattle-King County Economic Opportunity Board. Neighborhood House officials felt that there was a strong need for quality day care for children of low-income families, a good daily program which could strengthen the foundation upon which a child's

school progress would be based and broaden the often limited range of experiences for children from poverty areas.

A TWO-PART HEAD START IS INSTITUTED

Taking these factors into account, in 1967 Neighborhood House joined with the Seattle Day Nursery, an agency which has provided quality child care for many years, to institute a Head Start day care program for children from low-income families. Together these agencies provided the necessary support and supervision to ensure proper staff orientation, to implement high standards, and to avoid many of the mistakes often made by new programs. After 15 months, the supervisory association with the Seattle Day Nursery was discontinued; however, the Head Start program has retained a close association with Neighborhood House.

The Neighborhood House Head Start Day Care program has two distinct components. One is the project which operates in donated space in the St. James Lutheran Church, referred to as the St. James Head Start Center; the other project operates in individual homes in the low-income housing projects, referred to as the Head Start day care homes. Both program components provide health services, nutrition, education, social and psychological

services, and opportunities for parent involvement according to Head Start goals.

THE ST. JAMES HEAD START CENTER

This Center, under the direction of Mrs. Shirley Stone, has three classrooms of 15 students each. Each classroom has a permanent staff consisting of a head teacher, an assistant teacher, and one full-time and one part-time trainee.

Within the day care center three different models are being used as the basis of classroom operation and instruction: the Human Development Model, the Responsive Environment Model, and the Social Reinforcement Model. When the models were instituted, the head teachers, and in some instances other members of the teaching staff, were given special training in each of the three. Each head teacher then chose the model she felt most comfortable with and the one which best suited her instructional staff.

One classroom uses the Human Development Model, based on a curriculum by Bissell and Palomares and published by the Human Development Training Institutes in San Diego, California. It is a sequenced curriculum to develop awareness, mastery, and social

interaction skills in the child. Each child is rated every 6 weeks on the following areas of development: awareness of self, consideration for others, eagerness, effectiveness, flexibility, interpersonal comprehension, self-confidence, sensitivity to others, spontaneity, stability, and tolerance. In addition, a cumulative graphic record is kept in order to determine patterns of growth. One feature of this model is the participation of students in a "magic circle." This is typically a short session in which children, sitting on pieces of "magic carpet," exchange ideas and feelings within the group. In a beginning session each child might share what made him feel good about a particular toy or object he had brought to the circle. Later more complex topics are introduced.

The second classroom uses a Responsive Environment Model, based on Glen Nimnicht's approach developed at the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in Berkeley, California. The classroom environment is designed to be responsive to children, under the theory that they learn at different rates, in different ways, and learn best when they are interested. The responsive environment stresses the importance of the child's self-image and his ability to solve problems. The model also provides guidelines for evaluation of environmental factors, classroom

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control, child-teacher relationship, and individual children's conceptual skills.

The third classroom model, the Social Reinforcement Model, uses the teaching staff as reinforcers of positive skills and behaviors in order to encourage their development and eliminate negative behavior. The teaching staff keeps objective records on the frequency of behaviors they want to eliminate or reinforce. They are then able to set goals, to plan reinforcement contingencies, and to program curriculum materials individually for each child.

FLEXIBILITY IN THE CLASSROOMS

In working with the three models, the staff at the Center has discovered that they are not mutually exclusive. A general classroom approach which is flexible and takes advantage of learning situations as they arise is the pattern in all three of the classes.

In a typical classroom, staff members are all involved with the children in various individual and small-group activities. In one section of the room the head teacher may be working with a child using a lotto game to develop his visual discrimination and matching skills. In another area the assistant teacher, who is

training to be a head teacher, works with two boys at a table. The boys have been coloring and are discussing the fact that there are two orange crayons in the "colors" basket. The assistant teacher shows them still another orange crayon and goes into a simple song about "one and one more make two; two and one more make three." She repeats it several times, using the crayons to show the one-to-one relationship. By the end of the short "lesson," both boys have joined in and are using their fingers to show the numbers. At the same table four other 3-year-olds are busily engaged in the task of cutting out pictures from old Christmas cards and gluing them on construction paper. They are working under the guidance of a male trainee who discusses with them what they have cut out, the colors in the picture, and the paper they are pasting it on. He also prints each child's name on his paper as he finishes it, saying each letter aloud: "T-O-M-M-Y spells Tommy." As the children in this group finish, they move freely to another activity. In the classroom both freedom and responsibility are fostered; children are encouraged to clean up after themselves and do so willingly. There is an emphasis on recognizing the worth of the children as individuals and on allowing their free-flowing movement from one activity to another.

HEAD START DAY CARE HOMES

The Day Care Home Program, under the supervision of Mrs. Virginia Cohoon, includes 10 day care homes located in four of the five low-income housing projects in Seattle. The environment is that of a home instead of a classroom, but the same comprehensive care and educational program are provided as in the Center. This component of the Neighborhood House Child Care Services illustrates a system with exciting potential for expansion within the low-income community, one which could also have a large impact on day care for children of all economic levels.

A woman may become a Seattle Head Start day care mother if the family's income over the past year was below the poverty level according to Office of Economic Opportunity guidelines, and if she is in good health, lives near eligible parents who require care for their children, and passes a careful screening by the program staff. To accommodate more families with children who need day care, preference is given to mothers with no more than two children under 6 years of age. Children between the ages of 2 and 6 are eligible if their parents are in full-time employment or training and if the family income over the past year was below the poverty level.

A typical day care home serves no more than six children, including the day care mother's own children. The mother receives a monthly salary and is given a weekly food allotment for hot lunches and morning and afternoon snacks. Head Start further provides each day care home with basic equipment including art supplies, puzzles, blocks, books, records, and learning games for indoors. Outdoor equipment includes two tricycles, a wagon, and one large piece of equipment such as a climber or swing set. Also provided are cots, bedding, and fencing. Volunteers are encouraged to come into the day care homes regularly and plan activities for the children or take them on field trips. Each day care mother is given a half day off each week, and substitute day care mothers are provided for this time. The mothers use the time to study for courses they are taking at Seattle Community College or for personal business.

LOW-INCOME MOTHERS AS CREATIVE TEACHERS

A day care mother works closely with the supervisor and the educational director to plan a program for each child in her care. She keeps a child evaluation form which was developed by the staff and two day care mothers on each child, evaluating and setting goals for the child after he has been with her for 1 month and then again after every 6 months. These evaluations are discussed

with the supervisor, and the mother and supervisor decide which goals are the most important for the individual child. They then plan how they can work together and with the parents to accomplish these goals.

In the homes, day care mothers strive to create a general feeling of warmth and happiness. On a typical day, some children might be using homemade flour-and-salt dough; three or four older children might be using various cookie cutters, sieves, a rolling pin, and a potato masher; two of the younger children might just be manipulating the dough--poking, smashing, squishing it between their fingers, and smelling it. The age differences are evident here, but there is a total acceptance of what each child is doing both by the day care mother and by the other children.

The training which day care mothers receive through the program enables them to design a creative learning environment and to handle disciplinary situations constructively. While sitting on the floor reading a story with the children grouped around her, one mother keeps the attention of even the youngest in the group by encouraging lively discussion and asking questions about aspects of the story which particularly relate to the children. When the story is ended she brings out a small plastic swimming

pool, three large canisters, and a box of sand toys. The younger children squeal with delight as the older children help her empty the canisters, which contain a mixture of surplus wheat and corn meal, into the pool. As scoops, sieves, funnels, buckets, empty tin cans, and measuring cups are passed out, the children immediately dig in. After a few minutes of free activity, the day care mother sits down with one boy and as he sifts the mixture through a sieve into a coffee can, they discuss textures. This particular play activity is extensively used in the day care homes to teach such concepts as weight, size, volume, and texture. It was originated by one of the day care mothers and shared with the others during one of the periodic training sessions.

CAREERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Neighborhood House Child Care Services program provides many positions and training opportunities for low-income persons who have a sincere interest in and aptitude for working with young children. Staff members have developed comprehensive career ladders for teachers which allow participants in both program components to advance to higher levels of responsibility and salary as their training progresses.

The career ladder for the St. James Day Care Center has four levels. Level I is the entry level used to designate trainees. The beginning duties of trainees include observation and familiarization with classroom procedures, needs of the children, and various techniques used by other staff members. Increasing responsibility for participating with the group and working with staff, parents, and children is expected. Advancement requirements involve a combination of education and experience as well as demonstrated ability in working with young children. Trainees are also expected to substitute in the mornings for absent staff and to attend classes at Seattle Community College when funds are available.

Level II staff are designated as intern teachers. The duties at this level are more sophisticated than those at Level I, and an intern is expected to work independently.

Level III staff members are assistant teachers, and their duties include setting up and maintaining classroom procedures. Assistant teachers may have up to 3 years of experience and 42 college credits, making them well qualified for this program and likely to be sought out by another agency or program dealing with young children. Positions are often available with the 4C Program

(Coordinated Community Child Care) in Seattle, the Seattle Day Nursery, the Model Cities Program, or as Day Care Home Educators for Neighborhood House.

Those who remain at the Center move on to the position of head teacher in Level IV when they have had a minimum of 2 years' experience and 45 credits toward an Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree in family life. Duties include coordinating a class with the rest of the program, assessing needs of the staff for inservice training, and helping to plan and set up appropriate programs.

The career ladder for the day care home mothers is similar with three levels. Although a mother comes into the program with little or no background, she can move through all three levels in 3 to 5 years and should have accumulated 45 credit hours, which entitle her to an Early Childhood Education Certificate or a certificate related to the field of social work.

In the beginning the day care home mother works closely with the supervisor in all aspects of her program from parent contact and anecdotal record-keeping to the actual activities she provides for the children. As she progresses, she takes more responsibility; by the time she reaches Level III she is qualified to work

in a private day care center as a head teacher. This is the goal of many of the day care mothers.

PROGRAM STAFF

The educational services which the program offers for both children and adults from the low-income population are accompanied by administrative, health, and social services. The administrative and supporting staffs are involved in providing these services.

The entire program is under the direction of the Child Care Services Director, Mrs. Margaret Sanstad, with an assistant director for each of the program components. In addition, a nurse, a dentist, a psychologist, and a medical doctor all work part time with the program. The full-time educational director assists in developing educational goals and the means for meeting them based on the needs of individual children. The program also has the paid services of a cook, a secretary, a housekeeper, three social workers, a bookkeeper, and a bus driver.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT REFLECTS PROGRAM IMPACT

Parent involvement is one of the major components of Head Start and is encouraged in the Neighborhood House Child Care Services program. There is a parent advisory committee (PAC) made up of representatives elected by parents of both the Center and day care home children as well as members of the program staff. The PAC is responsible for making decisions concerning the program. There are also regular monthly parent meetings, usually held at the St. James Day Care Center. Transportation, babysitting, and often a free dinner are a part of the services offered to enable more parents to attend these meetings.

Parent support for the program is strong. A parents' study group was started by parents who felt the need to discuss their concerns. The social workers schedule these meetings and help in program planning. Parents are encouraged to visit the Center and the day care homes when their work or training schedules permit. They are also invited to plan with staff members to make or provide treats for special occasions such as birthdays.

The program's success is reflected in one mother's statement that "without the program I would probably be at home still on welfare," and in the words of another who said, "The knowledge that our children are well cared for, that they will be safe

during our absence, should come first. The fact they they will be enriched by wonderful, well-trained people who introduce them to things and experiences they would probably never know otherwise is an added blessing."

WHAT PRICE QUALITY?

The annual budget for 1970 is $429,616. This amount is not simply broken down into per-child cost for a day care program; it represents the cost of a wide range of services. The program is providing quality day care for over 100 children; it is also offering valuable inservice and college training as well as upward mobility for all of the day care home mothers and staff members at the Center who are from the target or low-income group. In addition, the program has developed a number of documents including career ladders and child evaluation forms.

The staff members of the Seattle Neighborhood House Child Care Services program have moved slowly and cautiously in order to maintain quality. They feel that the program has many exemplary features which might well be implemented elsewhere. They have designed operational procedures which can be used to expand the program to meet the needs of many more members of the community

whenever time and funds permit and, at the same time, keep the higher-level administration to a minimum.

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE EXPANDS

Neighborhood House has received a grant from the Washington State Urban-Racial-Disadvantaged Education Programs (URDE), which will be met on a three-to-one matching basis by the Federal Government out of title IVa funds. This grant will provide before- and after-school care for school-age children in three vacant four-bedroom housing units in the low-income housing areas. These will be called activity homes. Trained staff members will provide breakfast and an after-school snack as well as the opportunity for children to participate in a variety of activities including arts and crafts, music, group games, field trips, and individual and group tutoring. There has also been a need for care of children under the age of 2, and the grant will help expand the number of day care homes to provide care for children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years.

Another project which the grant will finance is care for sick children. Neither the public schools nor the Day Care Program can accept sick children. This has often become the reason why some working parents who are trying to escape poverty must give up and

go back on welfare. Under this grant three Sick Child Care Workers are being trained to go into the homes of the sick children and provide care so that the mother can continue in work or training. These staff members will be trained in sick-child care and also receive the training that regular day care home and center staff receive. They will then be available to serve as substitutes at the Center and in the homes when necessary.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Further details on the program can be obtained by contacting the director, Mrs. Margaret Sanstad, at the following address:

Neighborhood House Child Care Services
9415 18th Avenue S.W.
Seattle, Washington 98106

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Childhood Education

This is one in a series of 34 descriptive booklets on childhood education programs prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

The Day Nursery Assn. of Cleveland, Ohio
Neighborhood House Child Care Services, Seattle, Wash.
Behavior Analysis Model of a Follow Through Program, Oraibi, Ariz.
Cross-Cultural Family Center, San Francisco, Calif.
NRO Migrant Child Development Center, Pasco, Wash.
Bilingual Early Childhood Program, San Antonio, Tex.
Santa Monica Children's Centers, Calif.
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah
Dubnoff School for Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, Calif.
Demonstration Nursery Center for Infants and Toddlers, Greensboro, N.C.
Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C.
Center for Early Development and Education, Little Rock, Ark.
DOVACK, Monticello, Fla.
Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss.
Appalachia Preschool Education Program, Charleston, W. Va.
Foster Grandparent Program, Nashville, Tenn.
Hartford Early Childhood Program, Conn.
Philadelphia Teacher Center, Pa.
Cognitively Oriented Curriculum, Ypsilanti, Mich.
Mothers' Training Program, Urbana, Ill.
The Micro-Social Preschool Learning System, Vineland, N.J.
Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va.
Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y.
San Jose Police Youth Protection Unit, Calif.
Model Observation Kindergarten, Amherst, Mass.
Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Mass.
Martin Luther King Family Center, Chicago, Ill.
Behavior Principles Structural Model of a Follow Through Program, Dayton, Ohio
University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Springfield Avenue Community School, Newark, N.J.
Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans.
New Schools Exchange, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Tacoma Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Wash.
Community Cooperative Nursery School, Menlo Park, Calif.